

Wolfeboro Police Commission Meeting Minutes January 5, 2022

Members present: Chairman Steve Wood, Vice-Chair Bob O'Brien and Commissioner Shawn Coope

Staff present: Chief Dean Rondeau, Captain Livie, and Sherri Moore Recording Secretary

Chairman Wood called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Wood entertained the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner's Items

Chairman Wood announced that we were here to discuss the value of Central Dispatch being in the Police Headquarters building. Recently at a meeting it was mentioned to leave Central Dispatch in the Public Safety Building. Operationally we know the importance of keeping them with the Police. If they were to keep Central Dispatch at the Public Safety Building (PSB) the building would have to be enlarged and that the Public Safety Building Committee members learned that to remove Central Dispatch from the Police Department Building it would be quite the undertaking. The idea was suggested to save space. After speaking with the architect, they were able to make a reduction in the square footage without have to reduce the entire building. We will need to discuss this with the Town Manager. Chairman Wood asked Chief Rondeau to share some of his thoughts.

Chief Rondeau shared the background of how this discussion came to be. Two years ago, a Public Safety Building Committee was formed. The committee has come together to look at different options to see what makes the right sense for the PSB – one building or two separate buildings, different locations were looked at and discussed what to do with the Fire Substation. Ultimately the committee felt the Town would be best served with two buildings and decided on a location up on North Main Street. The architect came up with a two-story Police Station that would be approximately 13,000 sq. feet. One of the concerns from the most recent meeting was that a committee member thought the building needs to be reduced by 1,000 square feet. Everyone was in agreement to do that, and no one wanted to push back. However, the architect was not at the meeting. It was at this meeting that the Town Manager suggested keeping Central Dispatch at the current PSB. Both the Chief and Captain realized that they agreed to quickly to the suggestion. After giving it some thought they came to the conclusion on some different points:

1. Central Dispatch has become an integral part of the Wolfeboro Police Department. They are the official greeters, allowing to keep the doors open to the public. While are officers are out on the road doing patrol work, we are still able to keep the facility as a place of refuge and safety. People who have been scared or have been followed, have been able to come into the Police Station. We want to have a place of refuge for the community.
2. The Drug collection box is monitored by Dispatch and under the guidelines can only be at a Police Station.
3. Separating them from the Police would put an arbitrary barrier between them and the Police Officers.

4. Dispatch does a lot of criminal research for the officers, answers calls and complaints that come in. They do a lot of work for our Prosecutor by doing criminal record checks, calling court and subpoenas (for officers too) just to name a few.
5. They are the keepers of the Records. Supervisor Mia Lyons oversees record retention. She is responsible for Dispatch logs and making sure they are accurate and complete. Making sure the IMC data base is reconciled and completed so she can finalize year end reports. When report requests come in, she is the one responsible – she is first in the chain of command to see that it gets released.

Chief Rondeau went on to say that a lot of tasks would be hampered by having the distance between the Dispatchers, Police Officers and Prosecutor. Taking away Dispatch would not save money because the Town would need to have a total redesign of both buildings. Chief Rondeau believes it's best to leave well enough alone.

Chairman Wood responded that by separating there would be a break down in efficiencies.

Captain Livie commented that records are kept at the Police Department and how would Dispatch access the records.

Chief Rondeau added that if someone comes to the Police Department there would be no one there to greet people. He asked rhetorically if we would need to hire more people. A screen answering is not the answer. That would be a recipe for disaster.

Commissioner Coope shared that was experienced in Florida. There was a huge police department and no one there. People are left standing outside and waiting with no one around. If an emergency, you are left on your own. It's very impersonal.

Captain Livie added that the Courts order to have parental child swaps done at the Police Department because we have people present in the building.

Chief Rondeau added that the Police Department is also registered as a safe swap site for swapping goods and services because there are people in the building.

Commissioner Coope responded that ultimately there is very sensitive and private information. The Chief and Captain should be in the same building. It can also become necessary during a critical incident situation.

Chairman Wood was reminded of when we had a situation with an accident on the bridge on Pleasant Valley Road and that the Captain was there to help in Dispatch.

Commissioner O'Brien shared that you can't supervise people at a satellite location. Also, would be concerned with building security.

Chairman Wood responded that it's his personal opinion and sees no other way to continue the success of the Police Department but to keep the Central Dispatch together.

Captain Livie replied that at the end of the day, as we got this information and then took time to review it, we realized Dispatch is an integral part of the Police Department.

Tom Bell asked if there is a constituency wanting to see the separation happen?

Chairman Wood responded it was just a suggestion. However, when they told the architect that they didn't want to separate the architect was grateful. The changes that they talked about would just reduce the center rooms of the building. We made an honest group approach to reduce the size but you need to maintain the structure.

Bernie Wilensky commented that he is confused. One person said this and it's causing a tizzy? His experience is that 911 has always been with the Police.

Chief Rondeau explained that what happened was that in trying to be helpful the Town Manager threw it out there as a suggestion. As he and the Captain gave it some thought, they realized that it would not work...Dispatch has to remain in the Police Department.

Chairman Wood offered that when they had visited different Public Safety Buildings one new police department has already outgrown the building. The Wolfeboro Police Department is being designed with the future in mind. He also shared that everyone is trying to be well intended. However, not everyone understands the importance of Central Dispatch.

Chairman Wood entertained a motion for a vote to keep Central Dispatch with the Police Department.

Commissioner O'Brien moved the Wolfeboro Police Commission recommends that Central Dispatch stay within the Police Department upon movement to the new facility. Commissioner Coope seconded. Roll call vote: Bob O'Brien – yes, Shawn Coope – yes and Steve Wood – yes, Members voted, the motion passed.

Chairman Wood inquired about the Juvenile Services Officer workspace.

Chief Rondeau explained that his workspace is currently in with Sergeant Michael Strauch. He has also been working with the Detective and Staff Sergeant to inventory the evidence room. You will see him working out back as well because that is where evidence has to be logged.

Captain Livie added that Staff Sergeant Maloney will be overseeing the technology piece with Dispatch as well as learning CALEA standards.

Commissioner O'Brien inquired about where we are at with Part Time Officer Warn.

Chief Rondeau replied that the background is still be conducted on Officer Warn. He also shared that CALEA is coming down the pike whether we like it or not. Having the infrastructure in place is going to make us a bullet proof organization. Between, having trained personal and the new building built to CALEA standards – strengthens the organization.

Chairman Wood asked if anyone noticed on social media that someone questioned if there are body cams and cruiser cams? The person also was inquiring if the taxpayers are for it and is it a good thing?

Commission Coope explained the conflict with Federal level CALEA standards for all departments in NH and that State level CALEA is what it might have to come to.

Chief Rondeau agreed and shared that there is going to be an expense that comes with CALEA standards and looking at a cost of at least \$100,000 but combined with equipment, personnel and

infrastructure could be looking at \$300,000. Hopefully the State will come in with grant money. Chief Rondeau believes that it will be good for the organization and that it reduces liability.

Commissioner O'Brien is so glad the department is looking so far into the future.

Chief Rondeau responded that one of the things the architect asked when thinking about the needs of a new building was to look at the organization fifty years out. The Captain and Chief took a few weeks to produce the information to help with the design of the building and it will be built with CALEA, body cams and cruiser cams in mind.

Being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Wood entertained a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner O'Brien moved the Wolfeboro Police Commission to adjourn at 4:20 PM.
Commissioner Coope seconded. Being none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherri Moore